

14

BOOK BELONGS TO
MUSLIM GIRLS' SCHOOL

Key Stage 3

GET INTO
citizenship

Government and democracy

Larry Hartley



pfp

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GET INTO citizenship

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Government and democracy

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How your work will be assessed

There is a single end of key stage descriptor for citizenship:

'The expectations match the level of demand in other subjects and are broadly equivalent to Levels 5 and 6 at key stage 3.'

Each scheme of work states what 'most' students should achieve (ie. Level 5), that 'some pupils have not made so much progress' (ie. Level 4) and that 'some pupils have progressed further' (ie. Level 6).

Most of the activities that you complete in this book will be graded to either Level 4, 5 or 6. The chart below gives you an idea of what you will have to do to achieve each level.

End of key stage descriptor for citizenship (broken into three strands)	Level 4 'some pupils have not made so much progress'	Level 5 'most pupils'	Level 6 'some pupils have progressed further'
Strand 1 <i>'have a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study; the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens; the role of the voluntary sector; forms of government, provision of public services; and the criminal and legal systems'</i>	Pupils will know what it means to commit a crime and are aware that young children are immune from criminal prosecution. They will understand what voting is and some of the things that MPs do. They will know some of the differences between local and national government.	Pupils can describe how the law treats people and understand the function of parliament and democratic processes both at national and local level. They understand the basic structure of the youth justice system. They can conduct an enquiry and use the findings to draw simple conclusions.	Pupils know the importance of rights in a fair trial and they can explain and evaluate alternative voting systems. They reflect on how media coverage can influence elections. They understand the legal and ethical responsibilities of local government. They research, analyse and interpret data and use this to deliver presentations.
Strand 2 <i>'show understanding of how the public gets information; how opinion is formed and expressed, including through the media; and how and why changes take place in society'</i>	Pupils can give reasons for and results of events and changes and combine information from sources to answer questions.	Pupils begin to show how processes cause similarity and differences between different places and different environments. They begin to make links between reasons and changes and to evaluate evidence to reach a conclusion.	Pupils are able to explain why there are different interpretations of the same event and they gather and use evidence critically to show how and why opinions are formed and the different effects that various types of information have on people.
Strand 3 <i>'take part in school and community-based activities, demonstrating personal and group responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others'</i>	Pupils talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. They describe events and convey opinions. They ask questions and respond to the views of others.	In discussion they pay close attention to what others say, ask questions to develop ideas and make contributions that take account of others' views. Their talk engages the interest of the listener.	Pupils adapt their talk to the demands of different contexts. They use a variety of vocabulary and expression. They are fluent in their use of standard English.

What is local government and how does it work?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers. Do you know the meaning of the following words?

- MP
- councillor
- local council
- ward
- division
- electoral roll
- polling station
- ballot paper
- ballot box
- council tax

What will you know?

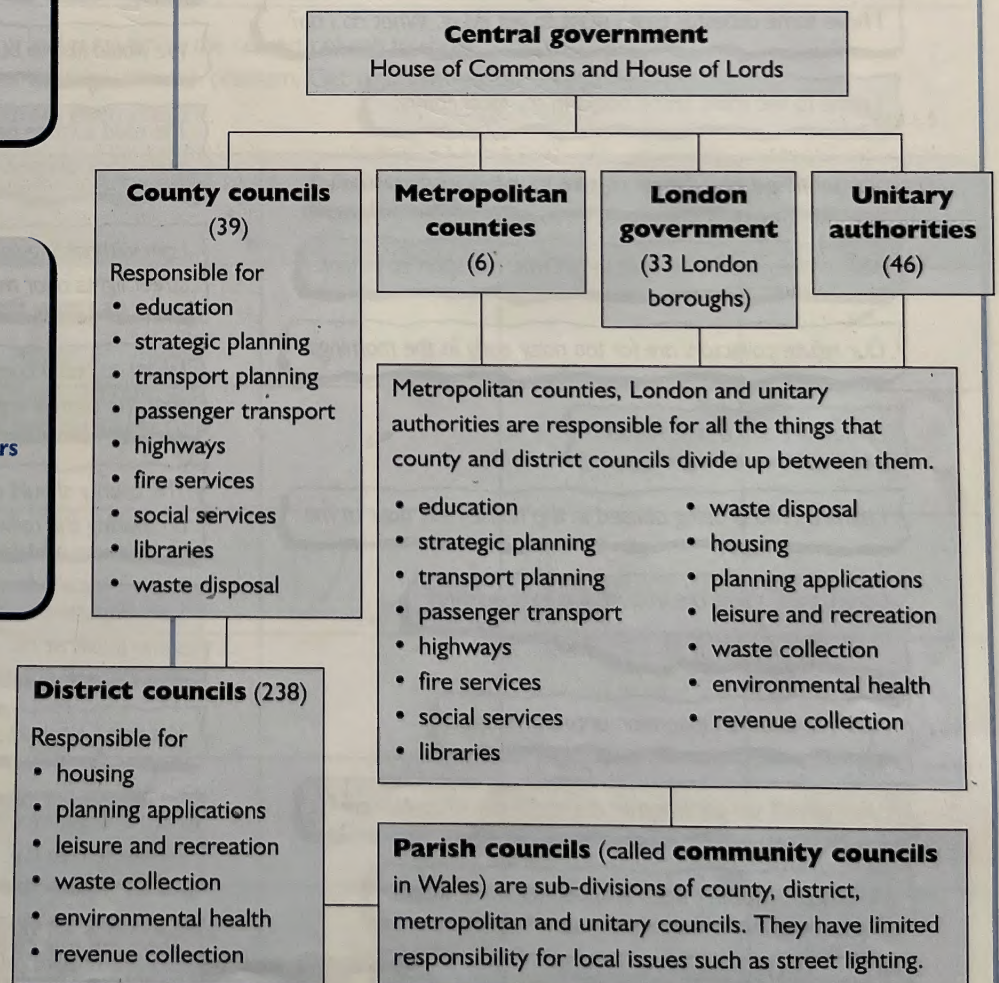
- What powers local government has.
- Where local councils get their money from.
- How people can become members of local councils.
- Who can vote in local elections and how elections are held.

Background

Laws in Britain are passed by **Members of Parliament (MPs)**. These MPs sit in the House of Commons in Westminster. But many of the decisions that affect our day-to-day lives and the area where we live are taken by **councillors** who work for **local councils**, not by the MPs who sit in Parliament. This is why local government, as it is called, is so important to all of us.

Look very carefully at the diagram below. It shows the different bodies of people, known as councils, that make decisions on local matters. It's quite a complicated diagram with lots of information, so it needs a bit of time to look at.

Local government in England and Wales



Which departments deal with which issues?

An activity to help you to understand how local government works.

Below are some extracts from letters written by people to their local councils. You are working in the post room of your local council and you have to decide which departments to send the letters to.

Divide two pages of your book into 15 small sections. Head each section with one of the things that County and District Councils are responsible for (see the diagram on page 3) such as education, strategic planning, housing, planning applications.

If your teacher has given you a photocopy of this page, cut the extracts out and paste them into your book under the correct headings. Otherwise, write the extracts in your book under the correct headings. Some of them could arguably go to more than one department, but you should be able to find two extracts for each department.

I want my son Peter to attend the following school.

I am unhappy with the plans that the county has for the future.

I don't agree with having a landfill site built near my home.

The speed limit in our village should be reduced to 30 mph.

I want to adopt children.

I have some asbestos that I want to get rid of. What do I do?

I want to see more crime books in my local library.

The proposed new bypass is going to cut across my land.

My children should be able to get free transport to school.

Our refuse collectors are far too noisy early in the mornings.

I want to claim a rent rebate.

I think a child is being abused in the house next door to me.

I don't think there are enough fire extinguishers in our local shopping centre.

I want to build an extension onto my house.

Why haven't we got Internet access in our village library?

My dustbins haven't been emptied for three weeks.

There should be more swimming pools in our area.

I want to know if my new building will meet fire regulations.

There is a factory near us that constantly gives out smelly fumes.

Why don't we have a skateboard park near us?

I think my house should be in a lower category when you calculate my council tax.

We would like to build a new supermarket in your area.

The road surface near my home is in a very dangerous condition.

I am withholding some of my tax because the street lights near my home aren't working.

I want to see a complete rethink of the way that the council organises its meetings.

The county should consider spending more money on making the railways safer.

I am disgusted with the behaviour of some pupils at my daughter's school.

We need a subsidised bus service.

I am a single mother and my child and I need somewhere to live.

There are rats constantly coming out of my next-door neighbour's garden. What can I do about it?

Candidates listen as local election results are read out.



Liz Frithson, the Argus, Brighton

2 Who deals with things in different parts of the country?

An activity to help you to understand how things are dealt with differently depending on where you live.

Copy this chart into your book and put a tick in the correct column to show which council is responsible for dealing with each problem. Get your information from the handout your teacher has given you.

Problem	District or borough council	County council	Other (unitary, metropolitan, London)
A person in Stockton-on-Tees wants a council house.			✓
A supermarket chain wants to build a new supermarket in Norfolk.	✓		
Someone moving to Bedfordshire wants information about schools in the area.			
A house owner in Torfaen wants to complain about the refuse collections.			
A student in Manchester wants to complain about the lack of night buses.			
A Wiltshire man wants to apply for a 'home help' for his 80-year-old father who lives in the county.			

How do you become a local councillor?

How many councillors are there?

In England and Wales there are over 21 000 people who serve as local, district, borough or county councillors. Each one is elected to represent one small geographical area known as a **ward** or a **division**. At present, county council divisions have about 10 000 registered voters for each councillor, whereas district council wards sometimes have only 2 000. Some wards in heavily-populated areas have two or even three councillors.

Who can become a councillor?

To become a councillor you must

- be 21 years of age or over
- be on the electoral roll for that district (usually this means you live in the district).

Who cannot become a councillor?

You cannot become a councillor if you

- are already employed by the council
- are bankrupt
- have cheated in elections before
- have been sentenced to more than three months in prison during the three years before the election.

Who can vote in local elections?

You can only vote in council elections if you are

- 18 years of age or over
- on the **electoral roll** of that ward or district (usually this means that you live there)
- a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or an EU citizen living in the area.

How does voting take place?

- Normally people go to a **polling station**, which has been set up in a school or other public building.
- They give their name to an official, who ticks it off a list of eligible voters.
- They are given a **ballot paper** with the names of all the candidates on it and vote by putting an X next to the name of the person they want.
- They put the ballot paper into the **ballot box**, without anyone seeing who they have voted for.

How often are local elections held?

- Every four years in England and Wales.
- Different wards of a county council are elected each year so this spreads out the number of elections.
- Elections are always held on the first Thursday in May.
- The person with the highest number of votes wins, unless it is a district with two or three members, in which case the two or three with the highest number of votes are elected.

How is local government financed?

- 25% of the money comes from a local tax known as the **council tax**.
- 45% is money given to the council by central government.
- 25% comes from rates or taxes paid by businesses.
- 5% comes from charges for local services or other fund-raising schemes.

► Now you know how to become a local councillor, move on to the next activity, where you will hold a mock local election.

3 Becoming a local councillor

An activity to help you to understand how local councillors get elected.

- Divide into four groups with about six to eight members in each group.
- Elect one of your group to be the candidate for local councillor (they will have to make a short speech to the class later).
- Decide who is going to do each of the other activities shown – survey of local issues, write an election flyer, write an election speech. You might divide into twos or threes to make sure the tasks get done quickly.
- Each candidate will make a speech outlining their policies and then the class will vote for **two** candidates.
- After the vote your teacher will see whether the second-choice votes need to be taken into consideration.

Do a survey of local issues

- 1 Work out what **local** issues you think people in your class might want to vote about. These may be things such as entertainment facilities in your area, protecting a local beauty spot, drug prevention, sports facilities, etc.
- 2 Now ask the other people in your class which of these issues are most important to them when it comes to voting.

Write an election flyer for your candidate

Write a short (one side of A4 maximum) election leaflet for your candidate. You could do this on a computer.

You need to include

- 1 their name
- 2 a brief description of who they are, that they live in the area, etc.
- 3 the main issues they stand for
- 4 why people should vote for them.

Write an election speech for your candidate

This should contain similar information to the flyer. It must

- be persuasive, make people want to vote for that person
- concentrate on local issues rather than national politics
- say exactly what they intend to do to improve things for the voters.

The ballot paper

Write the names of your four class candidates on your ballot papers.

Make sure there is one for each person in your group.



Jim Holden, the Argus, Brighton

Votes are counted after a local election.

A planning decision in your area

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers.

- Who decides whether buildings are allowed to be built in your area?
- Who is consulted?
- How are local council officials involved?

What will you know?

By the end of this unit you will know

- how planning decisions are made
- how local government is involved
- how local pressure groups and members of the public can have their say.

1 Discussing a planning application

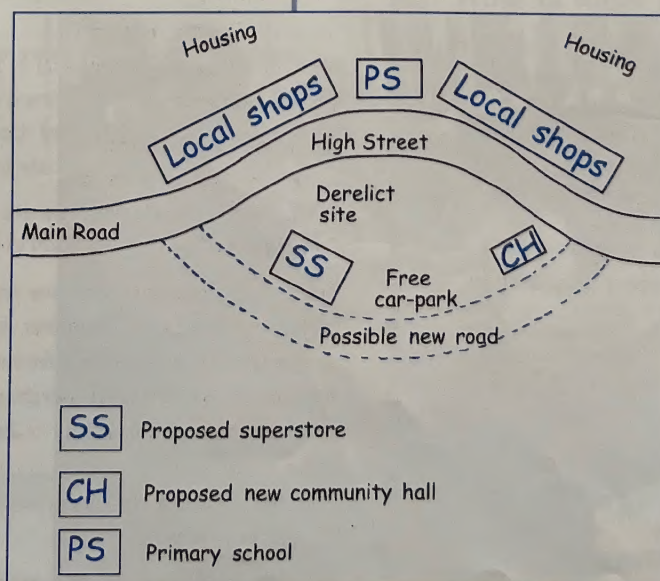
In this activity you will work in groups to discuss a typical planning application that a local council might have to deal with. This will introduce you to the ways that local government committees make decisions.

Background

Leybridge is a large village. There is very little unemployment in the village and several small local businesses in the High Street make reasonable profits and provide employment for a number of local people. Traffic congestion in the High Street is a problem, however, as there is very little parking available. The local district council, Leybridge District Council, is responsible for traffic management in the village and also for planning applications. There have been a number of complaints about traffic congestion in the High Street. Complaints have come from suppliers who have difficulty delivering goods to the shops and

from local residents who have difficulty parking their cars and crossing the High Street in safety. The local primary school, which has an entrance that opens straight onto the High Street, has also complained about the amount of traffic.

The council has received a planning application from Sellalot Supermarkets Ltd to build a superstore on the land on the south side of the High Street (see map). The site has been left vacant for nearly two years since a major printing works factory relocated to another area. It has become derelict and some residents think it is a dangerous site as youngsters tend to hang around there at night time. Sellalot Supermarkets say that they will put adequate free car parking around the store and that this can be used by customers of the store or as free car parking if people are using shops on the other side of the High Street. They have also said that they will build a small community hall for the Parish Council and local community use on land at the corner of the car park. At present the parish has to meet at the local secondary school on the very edge of the village and this means people having to travel a long way to attend the meetings.



Getting into role

Your teacher will divide you into six groups and each group will take on one of the group roles shown in the boxes on pages 10-12. Once you have read and discussed your roles, you will come together as a whole class to hold a meeting of the district council.

Hold a meeting

The meeting will be to decide whether or not to approve the planning application from Sellalot Supermarkets. The Director of Planning will chair the meeting but each group will have their say.

There are three possible outcomes of the meeting.

Option 1

Allow the planning application to go ahead exactly as it is planned. It will solve the problem of parking and delivery along the High Street and provide employment for people in the local area.

Option 2

Reject the application on the grounds that it will deprive the existing local businesses of business and attract even more traffic to what is already a dangerous High Street.

Option 3

Take a middle view by proposing alterations to the planning application such as providing an alternative access road for the superstore, to be paid for by Sellalot in return for the council allowing the superstore to be built.

Bear in mind that this would involve Sellalot Supermarkets in greater expense which they might not want to take on. They have already said that they would not be able to provide the new community hall if this was the case.



Some more things you need to know

- The district council is rumoured to favour Option 1.
- The meeting will be chaired by the district council's Director of Planning, a paid official who reports to elected councillors who will decide the matter.
- The Director of Planning will be supported at the meeting by those officials who have produced the detailed plans and costs of Options 1 to 3.
- The county council favours a supermarket in this area but has not ruled out any other option until all local views have been heard. The county council representatives will make up their minds which option to recommend to the county council once they've heard exactly what is best for the people and the area.

GROUP 1 (4 people)

Director of Planning and colleagues

The Director of Planning will chair the meeting and make the following points.

- 1 Welcome people to the meeting and explain that everyone will have their say in turn but that they must always ask for your permission to speak and not just try to shout out their views.
- 2 Point out that everyone is agreed that traffic congestion in Leybridge High Street is a problem, and that something must be done to solve it.
- 3 Tell people that the local authority has considered the planning application very carefully and thinks that there is a need for a superstore like the one being proposed somewhere in the area. The population of the village and the surrounding villages is growing quickly and with plans to build more than 1000 new homes in the area during the next two years the existing shops will not be adequate to supply the needs of the growing population.
- 4 Tell people that there are three possible options to be considered and you will now invite your colleagues to outline them. You will ask each one of them to present their ideas.

Director of Planning

Things that you could explain to people if they ask about them during the discussion.

You can assure everyone that everything will be done to minimise disruption and inconvenience, eg. there will be adequate road signs and widening of entrances, all local shops will be able to trade as normal while building is going on.

When the time is up you will close the meeting. You will add the following points.

- 1 Thank everyone for attending and taking an interest.
- 2 Thank those who spoke for expressing their views clearly.
- 3 Assure everyone that all will be taken into account before decisions are made.
- 4 Inform the meeting that a report will be made to the county council and that all opinions will be put forward.

- 5 Say that it is impossible to satisfy everyone but that the council will make a decision based on what it considers to be the best interests of the area as a whole.

Planning official 1

You will put forward Option 1.

Option 1 is to allow the planning application to go ahead exactly as it is planned. This means allowing the building of the superstore on the premises of the former printing works on the south of the High Street. It would solve the problem of parking and delivery along the High Street and provide employment for people in the local area. It would also make this potentially dangerous area (where the youth of the village meet) safe and provide the village with its much-needed community hall.

Planning official 2

You will put forward Option 2.

Option 2 is to reject the application on the grounds that it would deprive the existing local businesses of customers and attract even more traffic to what is already a dangerous High Street. There are plenty of shops in the village already and these would lose customers if a new superstore was built.

Planning official 3

You will put forward Option 3.

Option 3 is to take a middle view by proposing alterations to the planning application such as providing an alternative access road for the superstore (paid for by Sellalot Supermarkets) around the southern edge of the proposed site. This would leave the High Street free of any extra traffic that the superstore would generate. However, it would mean that Sellalot could not afford to build the community hall.

GROUP 2**Residents of Leybridge who are in favour of the superstore**

You like the idea of a new superstore. You do like to support local businesses but they often don't carry the range of goods that you want and this means travelling to a town 10 miles away to another supermarket. This is particularly the case with groceries.

You put the following points.

- 1 A superstore would provide a greater range of goods at cheaper prices and this would benefit everyone.
- 2 The increasing size and population of Leybridge means that the existing small businesses would not be able to cope with the demand anyway.

3 The new car parking facilities offered would ease congestion on the High Street and probably cause even more people to visit the small local businesses than would otherwise have done so. After all, the store would attract people to the village who previously might not have come.

4 The new community hall offered by the developers would not only benefit the parish council but could be used by the whole of the community for parties, wedding receptions, meetings, etc.

GROUP 3**Residents of Leybridge who oppose the superstore**

You object to the idea of a superstore. You think it would change the 'country' feel of the village and lead to local shops going out of business.

You put the following points.

- 1 A superstore would take trade away from local businesses.
- 2 A similar village elsewhere in the county has found that their superstore attracts even more traffic to the town, and at all times of the day and night.

3 If traffic congestion is a problem now, it would be even more of a problem with the new superstore. The High Street would have even more traffic on it, even if lots of it was heading for the car park. How long will it be before the store insists that you buy something from it before getting 'free' parking?

4 Leybridge is seen as having a pleasant and picturesque High Street – a superstore would spoil the character of the village.

GROUP 4**Environmentalists**

You wish to see a reduction in road traffic, mainly because it contributes to pollution. Superstores encourage more traffic and you are opposed to them as a matter of principle.

You put the following points.

- 1 Traffic congestion in Leybridge High Street is a severe problem. Exhaust fumes and noise pollute the town and accidents happen too often.
- 2 The proposed free car park would not solve this problem at all. It would encourage more cars to come to the village and the cars would still have to travel along the High Street.

3 The proposed alternative, to build a new road to the south of the store, means using land that is currently full of wildlife and greenery. A new road would spoil the look of the environment and destroy wildlife habitats.

4 The look of a modern superstore would spoil the countryside and ruin the look of the village.

5 You know that the present site is derelict and dangerous but suggest that it could be turned into parkland instead.

6 The council should think again and should give proper regard to the environment in both the long and short term.

GROUP 5

Local shopkeepers and other businesses

You are strongly opposed to the idea of a superstore because you fear that it would mean local shops would go out of business.

You put the following points.

- 1 A superstore would lead to local shops closing down.
- 2 Local businesses could not compete with the sort of prices that a superstore would offer.

3 The store would attract more people but they would park in the car park and be less likely than they are now to stop off at local shops.

4 The local parish council is allowing itself to be bribed with the promise of a new community hall. It is not taking the livelihoods of local people into account.

GROUP 6

Representatives of Sellaot Supermarkets

Obviously you are in favour of building the superstore. You argue more strongly for Option 1, which is more convenient for your organisation, and it allows you to 'give something to the community' by providing a community hall.

You put the following points.

- 1 The store would provide employment opportunities for local people.
- 2 The store would mean local people could buy goods more cheaply than they can now.

3 Local people would not have to travel so far to shop, and this would cut down on pollution and mean they use less petrol.

4 The free car parking being offered would ease traffic congestion on the High Street.

5 The increased number of people coming to the store would benefit local businesses.

6 The present derelict site is dangerous and young people often hang around there. Building a store would prevent this.

2 Why is it so difficult for councils to make decisions?

An activity to show how decisions made by local councils often do not satisfy everyone.

What to do

Answer the following questions in your books.

- 1 Describe in detail the role play that was just done by the class. Make sure you mention
 - what the main proposals were
 - which groups were in favour and which groups were against
 - their reasons for their views.

2 Who made the final decision about the proposal? Do you think this was right?

- Remember that these people were elected councillors by the people of the village.

3 Why was it so difficult for the council to make a decision that would satisfy everyone?

4 What decision would you have made? Give reasons for your decision.

How can young people make a difference locally?

What do you know?

- What are the main problems in your area?
- What causes these problems?
- What effects do these problems have on people in your area?
- Who is responsible for dealing with these problems?

What will you know?

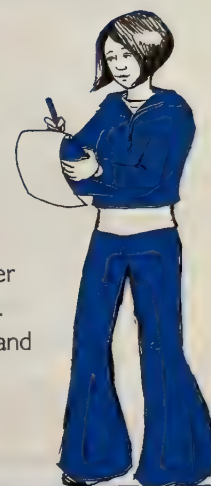
By the end of this unit you will know

- how to construct and carry out a survey to identify problems in your local area
- who to contact to get problems looked at
- how young people can influence their local area.

1 Conducting a survey to identify local issues

An activity to explore how to collect and use data effectively.

You will be designing and constructing a survey to discover what things people would like changed in your local area. You will use the results to write a 'manifesto' for change and decide how you could use the information to try to get things changed in your local area.



Identifying needs

- 1 Think of three things to do with living in your area that you are proud of.
- 2 Think of three things to do with living in your area that you want to see improvements to or problems in your area that you think need to be solved.
- 3 Your teacher will gather this information together on the board and group it under headings that will be useful to you in conducting your survey.

Drawing up your survey

You will need to agree as a class exactly what format your survey will take and what information to include, but here is an example of the sort of thing that would be manageable. You could produce the survey questionnaire on a computer if one is available. You will then conduct the survey with your friends and family.

Male/Female (delete as appropriate)
Student/Adult (delete as appropriate)

What are three good things about living in this area?

- 1
- 2
- 3

What are three bad things about living in this area?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Which two of the following do you think are the main problems in this area? Please underline them.

Lack of recreation facilities for young people • Lack of recreation facilities for adults • Car crime • Traffic • Pollution • Problems in schools
Youths loitering on the streets • Litter and graffiti • Vandalism
Others (please specify)

What do you think should be done about the problems you have identified?

Collating the results of your survey

When you have carried out your survey your teacher will see how many scores there are for each section by asking for a show of hands around the class.

You should produce two result sheets, one for the responses from young people and one for the responses from adults.

Constructing a cause and effect chart

Once you have identified the main areas of concern in your local area, write a cause and effect chart like the example below for each problem. This helps you to think about how you can prevent such problems from recurring or at least

prevent them getting worse. In the effects column try to think how many different types of people the problem could affect because these are the people you will want to get on your side in your attempt to put things right.

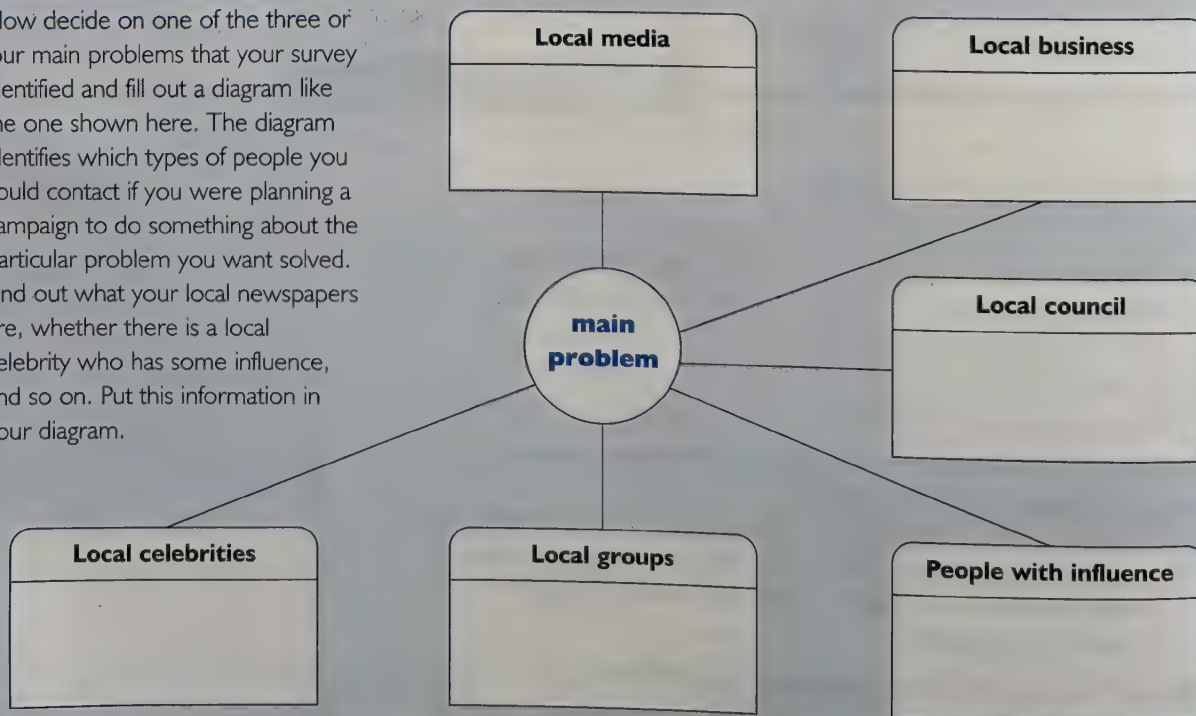


Litter and graffiti - causes and effects

Causes of the problem	Effects and types of people affected
People throw litter on the streets. Local shops produce too much packaging. People don't care if they drop litter. Young people think graffiti is clever. Young people are bored.	The council spends tax-payers' money on clearing up litter and getting rid of graffiti. Young and older people all find it unpleasant. Shopkeepers find it puts people off shopping in their area.

Planning your action

Now decide on one of the three or four main problems that your survey identified and fill out a diagram like the one shown here. The diagram identifies which types of people you could contact if you were planning a campaign to do something about the particular problem you want solved. Find out what your local newspapers are, whether there is a local celebrity who has some influence, and so on. Put this information in your diagram.



Writing your manifesto for change

You've now done all the background research necessary to plan how to get things changed in your area. All that remains is for you to write a detailed plan of action about how to get things changed.

Lay out your document something like the one shown here.

Manifesto for change

The main problem

Write in detail here the main problem in your area that you have decided to tackle.

Make sure you say exactly

- why it is a problem
- who it inconveniences and in what ways
- what the causes of the problem are
- what the possible results could be if something isn't done about the problem.

Use the information from the cause and effect chart you completed earlier.

How you know this is a problem that interests local people

Explain how you devised and then carried out a questionnaire and what the results of that questionnaire were.

You could show your results in the form of graphs showing what the various problems were and how many people identified each thing as a problem.

What proposals you have for dealing with the problem

Use some of the ideas that were generated in the results of your survey and also some ideas from the chart you completed in the 'Planning your action' section of this activity. In this section you are trying to work out what will be the most effective way to get things changed. Explain why you have chosen the methods that you have and why you have not chosen some of the other possible methods. In other words, you are saying why some methods are likely to be more effective than others.

How your work will be assessed

Level 4

If your writing shows that you have described most parts of the process but you don't say which problems were the most important or why some actions you decide on are more important than others then you will probably be given a Level 4.

Level 5

If you describe the problems and the causes and consequences of the problems well and begin to say why you selected one particular problem as being more

important than the others and why you chose one way of trying to solve it as more important than other ways, then you might be given a Level 5.

Level 6

If you do everything that is in Level 5 but also say why some things were more or less important to certain groups of people and why you didn't choose certain ways of trying to solve the problem then you could be given a Level 6.

Self assessment

Before you hand in your work take three different-coloured pens or pencils. Using one colour underline each bit of the essay that you think shows you have answered at Level 4. Using a second colour underline each bit of your answer that you think shows you have

answered at Level 5. Use a third colour to underline what you think are Level 6 comments.

Don't forget to put a key so that your teacher knows which level each of your colours stands for.

Why do we vote?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers.

- What does 'democracy' mean?
- What is a 'general' election?
- How often are general elections held in Britain?
- What percentage of people vote in general elections?

What will you know?

By the end of this unit you will know

- why voting is important
- why voting is not appropriate in every situation.

Voting and democracy

Have you ever voted for anything?

For most of you the answer to that question will be 'yes'. It might have been in class to see how many people wanted a certain thing. It might have been to elect a school council representative or simply as part

of a family decision about where to go or what to do. In most cases we like voting because we feel that our views are being taken notice of, that at least we are being asked our opinion.

Problems with voting

One problem with voting is that the people who win the vote and get the decision they want are usually happy. But the people who lose the vote sometimes think that they might as well not have bothered to vote in the first

place. It can be difficult to accept things when the vote goes against us – we do not usually change our views just because a majority of people thought we were wrong.

Democracy

In Britain we live in a **democracy**, which means 'rule by the people'. In a democracy we have the chance to vote for the people who will form our government and then make decisions on our behalf. These people are known as MPs which is short for Members of Parliament. They might still make

decisions we disagree with, even though we have elected them, but at least we get the chance to vote for someone else the next time if we don't like what they do. In many countries people don't get the opportunity to vote for whoever they want – they have to accept rule by whoever becomes the most powerful.

Deciding whether to vote

General elections are the elections that are held every four or five years to choose the MPs who will run the country. In these elections more than 25% of the people who can vote (everyone over the age of 18, with a few exceptions) do not do so: that's one in every four people. In **local government elections** where people who

run things such as transport, education and social services locally are voted into power, it is rare for more than one person in three to vote. Sometimes people say that they don't understand enough about politics to know what they would be voting for – hopefully, after doing the activities in this book you will not be one of those people.

1 Why bother to vote?

An activity to help you to understand why some people think it is important to vote and some do not.

Look at the statements in the speech bubbles on these pages. In your book, sort the statements into two columns headed 'Reasons why we should vote' and 'Reasons why we should not vote'.

When you've done this, put numbers next to each statement, with number 1 being the statement you agree with the most and number 10 being the one you agree with the least.

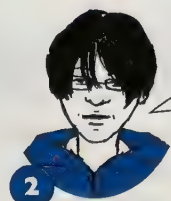
Using the numbered statements, write an answer to the question 'Should we bother to vote?'. Make sure that you include all the reasons in the speech bubbles ('Some people think that...') and say why you have chosen the ones you agree with the most and why you have rejected the ones you agree with the least.



Voting is an important responsibility and we should take it seriously.



It doesn't take much effort to go out and vote so we've got no excuses not to do so.



It's impossible to make a difference no matter what you do.



All the parties are offering the same policies so it doesn't really matter who gets to power.



In many countries people don't have the right to vote and can't influence their governments at all. We are lucky to live in a democracy and should make use of our right to vote.



I don't understand what they're all talking about so it isn't right that I should vote. I'm not interested in politics.



It's better to join protest groups and get things changed that way, than it is to vote in general elections.



If we don't vote then we have no right to complain if decisions are taken that we don't like.



There's no point in voting because once politicians get into power they don't do what you want anyway.



Important decisions that affect all of our lives are made by MPs so we should make sure that as many people as possible take part in electing them.

2 Should we always have a vote?

An activity to explore decisions that cannot be made effectively by voting.

What to do

Sometimes taking a vote is not the best option. Here are four examples. Write them down and say why voting would not be appropriate in these situations.

- 1 A general in the army takes a vote on whether the troops should fire at the enemy.
- 2 A parent lets a group of children vote on whether or not they should be allowed to play football in the road.
- 3 A surgeon in a hospital telephones all someone's relatives to ask for their vote before she does an emergency operation.
- 4 A football referee asks the players to vote on whether someone should be sent off or not.

How do elections work?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers. Do you know what the following words mean?

- MP
- constituency
- polling station
- candidate
- secret ballot
- first past the post
- proportional representation (PR)
- seat
- coalition government

What will you know?

By the end of this unit you will know

- how Britain's electoral system works
- the arguments for and against proportional representation (PR).

Voting in general elections

Every four or five years everyone over the age of 18 (with a few exceptions) gets the chance to vote for someone to be the **MP** (Member of Parliament) for their town or area (known as a parliamentary **constituency**). Quite often a school is used as a **polling station** (a place where people go to vote) – you might have seen polling station signs up in your school.

People go into the polling station, where they are given a ballot paper listing the names of the people who want to be MPs in their area. These people are known as **candidates**.

In Unit 6 you will take part in a mock election campaign. For the moment you need to know that people fill out a ballot paper like the one on this page by putting an X in the box next to the name they want to vote for. This confuses some people the first time they do it because putting a X

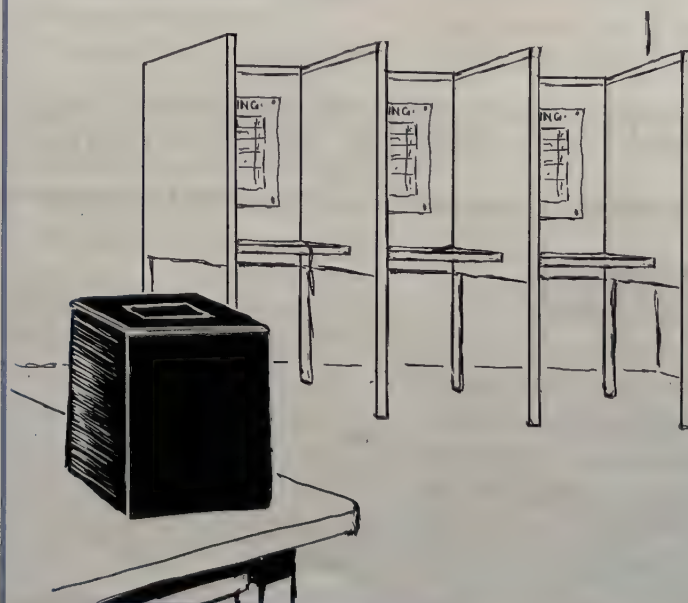
can mean you don't want something rather than you do. It goes back to the time when very few people could write so they would sign with an X instead.

Example ballot paper

Vote for ONE candidate only.

J A Whatsit	<input type="checkbox"/>
P J Thingamebob	<input type="checkbox"/>
B O Ujama flick	<input type="checkbox"/>

Voters go to a booth like the one in the picture so that they can vote in secret without anyone being able to influence their decision. This is known as a **secret ballot** – people fought long and hard during the 19th century for this right. Previously people had often had to vote for a candidate in a public meeting by raising their hands. Can you think what problems this might have caused?



1 How are MPs elected in Britain?

An activity to show you how Britain's 'first past the post' system works.

What to do

Look carefully at the fictional election results for four constituencies below.

Party	Constituency				Total votes for each party	
	Andover	Blackburn	Colchester	Dartmouth		
Yellow Party	200	100	100	100		
Pink Party	131	55	20	44		
Purple Party	40	80	110	20		
Winning Party						

Copy the table into your book (the last column has been left blank deliberately but make sure you copy it anyway). Add up the number of votes for each party. Write the numbers in the total column.

In each constituency, the party that got the most votes is the one that gets elected for that constituency. Decide which party has been elected in each constituency and write their name (Yellow, Pink or Purple) in the 'Winning party' row.

We have what is known as a **first past the post** system in Britain, which means whoever gets the most votes in a constituency is elected – the other votes do not count.

- If these results were the same all over the country (there are 659 constituencies) which of the three parties above would form the government?
- What happens to all the votes for those parties who came second or third? Is this fair in your opinion?
- Can you think of a fairer way of counting up and using the votes?

Proportional representation

Some countries, such as Italy, have a system of counting general election results known as **PR** or **proportional representation**. This means that they add up all the votes that a party has got from all over the country and then give out places (known as **seats**) in parliament based on the proportion of the total votes the party got. So, for example, a party that gets twice as many votes as

another is given twice as many seats. What do you think of this idea in principle? Does it seem fairer? Because PR produces a more even distribution of seats it often leads to a **coalition government**. This is where two or more parties agree to share power so that they have enough seats to form a government. Do you think this would be good or bad for the country?

2 What is proportional representation?

An activity to help you to understand the principle of proportional representation.

What to do

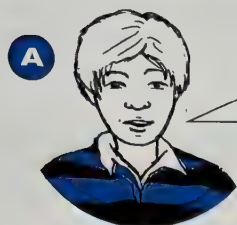
- 1 Put the title 'Seats gained under PR if 1 seat for every 250 votes' at the top of the last column in your chart.
- 2 Fill in how many seats each of the Yellow, Pink and Purple parties would have got in this system.
- 3 In what ways are the PR results different from the 'first past the post' results? Would the PR system be better or worse for each of the three parties? Explain your answer.

3 Is proportional representation a good or a bad idea?

An activity to help you to debate in depth the points in favour of and the points against proportional representation.

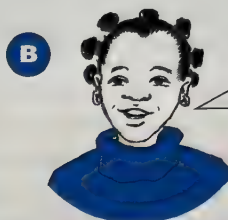
Look at the speech bubbles on this page with different comments about proportional representation.

Five of the comments support the idea of proportional representation and five of them are against it



A

PR leads to coalition governments which can never make bold decisions as they often don't agree with each other. Coalition governments are weak governments.



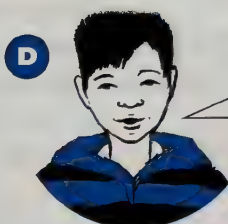
B

PR is much fairer because each party gets seats according to the percentage of the vote they get.



C

The present system doesn't give the people what they want. Sometimes a party can get into power when more people overall have voted for another party.



D

The present system usually creates a clear winner and it's good to know someone is in charge and can take decisions without having to consult other parties.



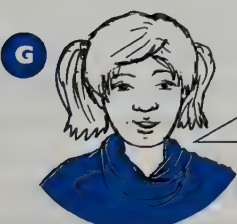
E

In some countries like Italy that have PR, governments can change every two or three months and this means nothing lasting gets decided.



F

PR means smaller parties can still be represented in parliament even if they don't win a constituency, so minority views are represented.



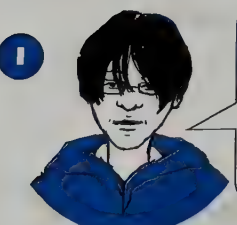
G

PR encourages the growth of more parties, as they have a better chance of getting into parliament, and this gives people more choice.



H

The United States only has two parties and is a successful superpower, so where's the need for PR?



I

If parties that don't even win a single constituency have MPs in parliament that gives them more influence over our country than they deserve.



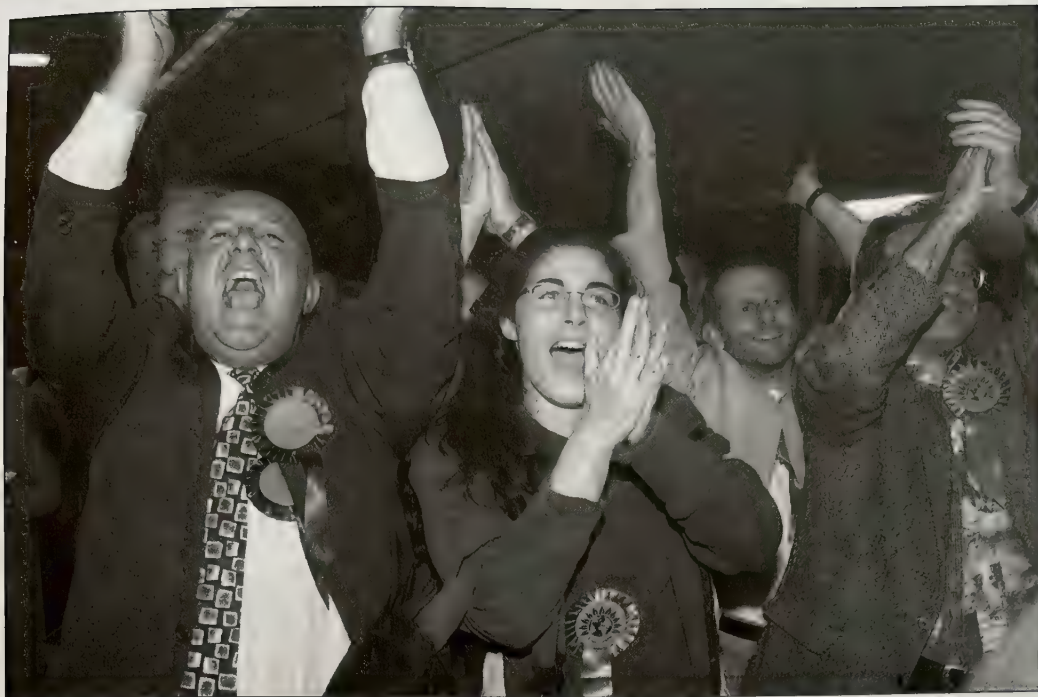
J

PR sometimes means two or more parties have to join together to form a government. This is good because it stops one party becoming too powerful and getting its own way on everything.

What to do

1 In your book, arrange the comments under two headings, 'Arguments in favour of PR' and 'Arguments against PR'.

2 When you've sorted the comments into columns, put a number next to each one with 1 being the argument you think is most important and number 10 being the argument you think is least important.



Party supporters celebrate victory.

4 How good is Britain's electoral system?

An activity drawing together all your arguments about Britain's electoral system

What to do

Now write a long written answer to the following question.

'Proportional representation would be a better system and would mean that Britain had a government that was more representative of what the voters actually wanted.' How far do you agree with this statement?

In your answer you should make reference to all the ten points of view you have just listed in your table and explain why you agree or disagree with each one. You also need to explain whether or not you agree or disagree with both parts of the statement in the question (ie. (i) the system would be better (ii) the government would be more representative of what people actually wanted).

How your work will be assessed

Level 4

If you write a description of the main arguments for and against PR with some explanation of why you agree or disagree with the statement then you will be awarded Level 4.

Level 5

If you do all that is required at Level 4 but begin to analyse why some arguments are stronger or weaker than others and why there might be advantages and disadvantages of both systems then you may be given Level 5.

Level 6

To gain a Level 6 you will need to do all that is required for Level 5 but also begin to say which arguments support which of the two parts of the statement. In other words, which arguments support and which weaken the view that PR would be a better system and which arguments support or weaken the argument that PR would be more representative of what the voters wanted.

How to get elected

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers. Do you know what the following words mean?

- sound bite
- slogan
- manifesto
- press release
- canvassing

What will you know?

By the end of this unit you will know

- techniques that politicians use to get their message across in election campaigns.

Background

The pictures on these two pages show you different ways used by people who want to be elected to get people to listen to their ideas.

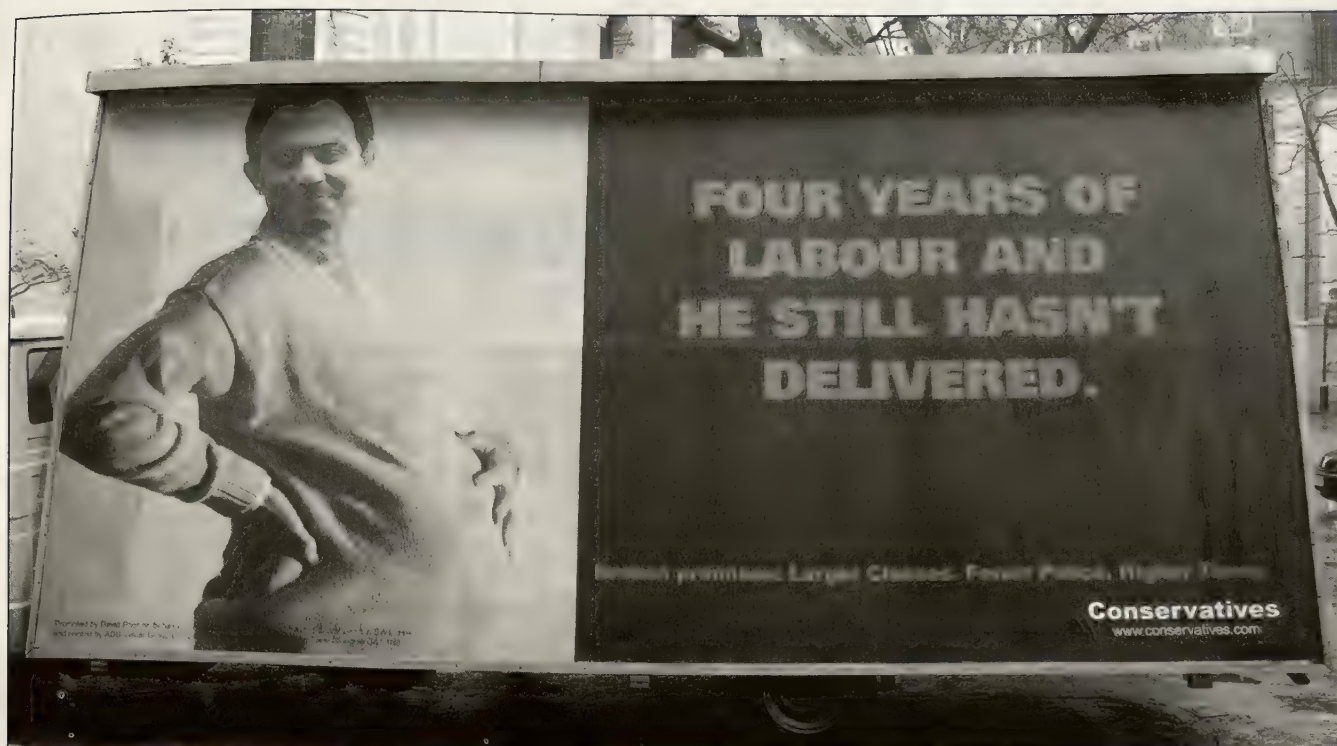
Quite often they will make up short catch-phrases that will stick in people's minds and get a message across quickly. In the 1950s the Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan famously used the phrase 'You've never had it so good' to try to persuade voters that they were well off under his government. Television and radio editors often include such short extracts in their broadcasts – when they are called **sound bites**. Politicians are aware of this and often write short catchy phrases in the hope that they will be used as sound bites.

Posters and press advertisements for political parties often use **slogans** to get their message across. These slogans are particularly effective and memorable when they use puns (plays on words).

Look at the picture of the Conservative poster with the slogan 'Four years of Labour and he still hasn't delivered'. The poster uses an image of Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair which has been manipulated to look as if he is pregnant. The slogan makes a pun on both the word 'Labour' ('giving birth' and the political party) and the word 'delivered' (meaning delivered on his promises and delivered in terms of giving birth).



Prime Minister Harold Macmillan gives a television interview in 1958.



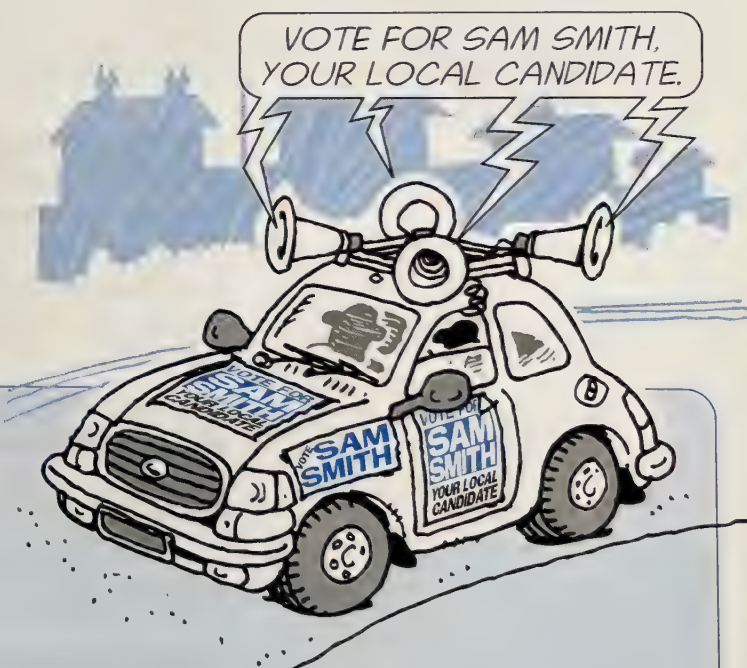
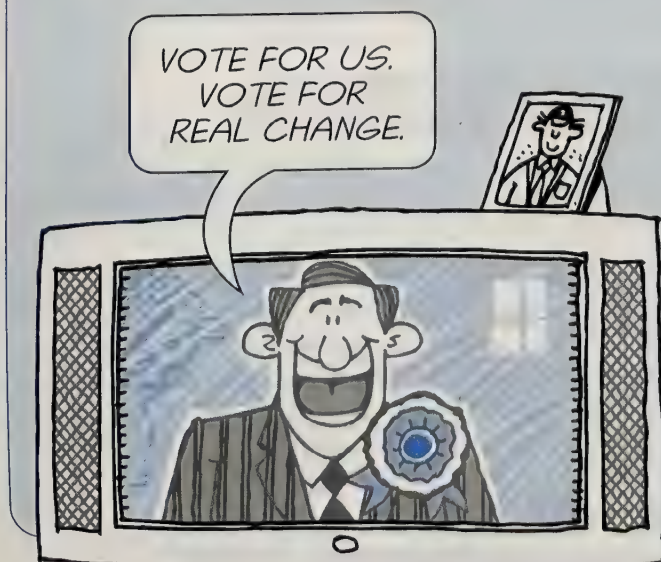
A 2001 Conservative pre-election poster.

1 How do politicians communicate with voters?

An activity to investigate some of the different methods that politicians use to get their message across to voters.

What to do

- 1 List the different methods that candidates use to try to get their message across to the public – think of as many as you can. There are clues in the illustrations and photographs in this unit.



- 2 Think of some issues that might get people interested during an election and write three slogans that would sum up the issue and get people's attention. Try to make your slogans short, punchy and memorable – remember they might be used as television sound bites. (Your teacher will suggest some typical issues if you can't think of any yourself.)
- 3 Which of the methods of communicating with voters that you have just written about do you think would be the most effective? Give reasons for your answer.

2 Holding a mock election campaign

An activity to explore the techniques candidates use to grab voters' attention and get their message across.

- Divide into groups of four people.
- Select one person to be your candidate (they will make your speech, so choose the person who can sound the most convincing).
- Decide on a name for your party.
- Produce a party manifesto.
- Make copies of your manifesto and give one to each of the other parties.
- Write a press release for a newspaper.
- Produce a party poster.
- Write a speech for your candidate.

How will your work be assessed?

You will be assessed not only on the quality of the work that your group produces but also on the part you play in the group activities.

Your teacher will show you a sheet called 'Citizenship Strand 3 Self-

Assessment'. You will be asked to fill this out at the end of the activity so look at it carefully so that you know what is expected of you.

Here are some guidelines about what your documents need to contain.

Produce a party manifesto

A **manifesto** is a short booklet that outlines what your party stands for and what it will do.

It needs to contain your main aims as a party so you have to say what you will do about major issues such as the National Health Service (NHS),

education, transport, social services, crime, taxes and other issues.

It should have some eye-catching images and/or phrases that sum up your party – you need people to remember what you stand for.

Write a press release for a newspaper

Your **press release** is like a shortened version of your manifesto. It is something that newspapers can use to turn into a longer article, but it has to

be short and to the point. Don't forget to say why you would be better than other parties and suggest how the other parties would be worse than you.

Produce a party poster

Your poster should be eye-catching and have a memorable image that makes a strong point about your party (or about your opposition).

It shouldn't have too many words on it because people won't bother to read lots of writing on a poster.

Write a speech for your candidate

This is the hardest thing to write. The speech has to get your audience's interest by focusing on things that matter to them. People are more likely to sit up and listen if your speech has a strong, imaginative beginning. Try using techniques such as rhetorical questions (questions asked to make a point,

rather than actually needing an answer) or using groups of three words (such as 'a public transport system that is cheap, clean and reliable'). You need to get across the main ideas of your party but in a way that makes people think 'Yes, I like what they're saying, I'll vote for them.'

Assessment

Fill out the sheet called 'Citizenship Strand 3 Self-Assessment'.

3 The doorstep challenge

An activity to explore political debate in the context of canvassing door-to-door.

What to do

In pairs, write a short scene between a parliamentary candidate and a member of the public that takes place on a doorstep. The candidate wants to find out if the person intends to vote for them, and if not, to persuade them to do so. This is known as **canvassing**.

CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR VOTE?



You could start it like this.

Candidate: Good morning. My name is and I am the parliamentary candidate for the Party. I wondered if our party could count on your vote or if there are any questions you would like to discuss about our policies.

Householder: Well, I don't know, that depends on what your policies are. What are the main things you stand for?

The candidate should refer to the manifesto and speech that their group wrote and try to persuade the person in the house to vote for them. Imagine the kind of questions and arguments that the householder might put.

Carry on the conversation, with the householder asking questions about such things as health, education, transport, taxes, etc.

You could act out the scene for your classmates or record or video it.

What to do

Which of these statements about door-to-door canvassing do you agree with and which ones do you disagree with? Explain why.

- It's the best way to get people to vote for you.
- It means candidates have to be able to think on their feet.
- It lets people know exactly what the party stands for.
- It could be a good way to get people to vote who otherwise might not bother.
- It's a waste of time as people have usually already decided who they are going to vote for.
- It could be dangerous as people might get violent.
- It's an invasion of privacy as people shouldn't be pestered in their own homes.

A target-setting activity

Look back at the sheet called 'Citizenship Strand 3 Self-Assessment' that you filled out for activity 2. Now decide how you could do better next time you have to take part as a member of a group.

Choose one or more of the following suggestions from each heading and write them on the back of your self-assessment sheet as targets for improvement.

You might not feel confident enough to do all of the suggestions so pick the ones that best fit your own personality, but don't make it too easy for yourself – set yourself a bit of a challenge.

Talked and listened with confidence

- I will make more contributions when we are discussing things.
- I will say what I think and not be too easily swayed by other people.
- I will suggest things to others in the group.

Asked questions and responded to the views of others

- I will ask at least two questions either of the teacher or of someone else in my group.
- I will make sure I say something encouraging to every member of the group.

Took part in the debate and said something in a way that the rest of the class could understand

- I will make at least one comment in front of the whole class in the discussion.
- I will make at least one comment to my group in group work.
- I will be the one to make the speech or to take a speaking role.

How does Parliament work?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers.

- What is the House of Commons?
- Who sits in the House of Lords?
- What is meant by the 'opposition back benches'?
- What is a bill?
- How do MPs vote in Parliament?
- What is a 'life peer'?

What will you know?

- How the House of Commons is organised.
- How a bill becomes a law in Parliament.
- The make-up of the House of Lords.
- What powers the House of Lords has over laws.
- What powers the Queen has over the government.

The British Parliament

Parliament consists of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons is where the elected members of Parliament (MPs) take part in debates and vote on different issues to do with running the country.

The House of Commons and House of Lords in Westminster, overlooking the Thames in London.



0 What do all these words mean?

An activity to build your knowledge about how the House of Commons works.

How much do you know about how your country is governed? The British Parliament goes back many centuries and has a lot of traditions associated with it. Some of these traditions and practices have unusual or old-fashioned names.

See if you can match up the terms with their meanings. Working in pairs, look at each definition at the right and see if you know, or can guess, which term from the list in the box below it goes with. If you get stuck, ask your teacher for a clue.

When you have decided which is which, copy the definitions into your book and write the correct word or phrase beside each one.

- **the cabinet**
- **the Speaker of the House**
- **the Prime Minister**
- **government back-benchers**
- **the shadow cabinet**
- **the leader of the opposition**
- **opposition back-benchers**
- **the parliamentary mace**
- **civil servants**
- **the 'ayes' lobby**
- **the 'nos' lobby**

1 The place where MPs go when they are voting against something.

2 The place where MPs go when they are voting in favour of something.

3 The person who keeps order during debates and can tell people to leave the House if they become unruly.

4 The leader of the largest party.

5 The leader of the second largest party.

6 The people who are employed to carry out the administration for the government.

7 MPs in the ruling party who aren't ministers and who don't have special tasks to do.

8 MPs in the opposition party who aren't shadow ministers and don't have special tasks to do.

9 The members of the government who hold ministerial office or have special jobs to do.

10 The members of the opposition who have similar roles to the cabinet, except they are not in power.

11 An object that represents Parliament's power and ability to make laws and is placed in front of the Speaker when Parliament is in session.

How does Parliament make laws?

Before something becomes a law, it goes through the following stages.

Before a Bill goes to Parliament

Consultation → Green Paper → White Paper

In the House of Commons

First Reading → Second Reading → Committee Stage → Report → Third Reading
→ Division (vote)

In the House of Lords

First HOL Reading → Second HOL Reading → HOL Committee → HOL Report
→ HOL Third Reading → Royal Assent

Before the government can ask Parliament to discuss whether something should become a law or not they have to consult with a wide range of people who might be affected by the law. Civil servants (people employed by the government to help them do their work) usually carry out research to find out people's opinions on an

issue and they then produce what is called a **Green Paper**. The government minister (MP in charge of the relevant department) and others read this and produce proposals for Parliament to discuss in a **White Paper**. The proposals contained in the White Paper are turned into a **bill** and debated in the House of Commons.

2 Take part in making a bill become law

In this activity you will imagine that your classroom is the House of Commons and that you have a bill presented for debate. This will help you to understand how a bill becomes law.

Get set up

The classroom should be set out like the House of Commons, with two sets of chairs opposite each other and a chair for the Speaker of the House at one end. Behind the sets of chairs (benches) should be space for the 'ayes' and 'nos' lobbies. Decide who is going to be the Speaker (the Speaker decides who will speak and in what order), who will be the prime minister and members of the government and who will be the leader of the opposition and members of the opposition. You will also need a clerk to read out the main proposals of the bill and two tellers to count the votes in the lobbies.

The first reading

No debate takes place on the first reading of the bill. It is just so that the MPs can hear the main proposals. The clerk should read out the bill (see box).

Obviously a real bill would be much more complicated than this, but it will give you some idea of the process that Parliament goes through.

Bill on smoking in the school

The government proposes that:

- 1 Students over the age of 16 should be allowed to smoke in school.
- 2 A special smoking room should be set aside for those students aged over 16 who wish to smoke.

Preparing your arguments

Now split up into two groups – the government (who are supporting the bill) and the opposition (who are opposing it). Jot down between you a list of arguments why the bill should become law (if you are in the government) and a list of arguments why it should not become law (if you are

in the opposition). It doesn't matter if these are not your genuine views – you are taking on a role. Make sure that different people are ready to give different arguments when asked to do so by the Speaker.

The debate

During the **second reading** of the bill there is a debate on the general principles of the bill. The bill then goes to the **committee stage** where it is debated line by line. Changes are considered when the bill goes back to the House of Commons in the **report stage**. This report is then debated during the **third reading**. There are very strict rules about how this is done and you should follow them closely in your debate on the smoking bill.

- 1 The Speaker calls upon someone to deliver the motion. In this case it is whoever you have chosen as prime minister – they read out the ‘Smoking in school’ bill shown.
- 2 The Speaker then calls upon the leader of the opposition to put his or her different points about the motion.
- 3 The Speaker then calls on other members of the government and the opposition in turn to give their views. MPs are always referred to as ‘the honourable member’.
- 4 When people wish to speak they try to catch the Speaker’s attention by standing. They always stand when they are speaking and sit down when they have finished.

The division or vote

It is now time to vote on the bill. In Parliament a vote is called a **division**.

- 1 The Speaker reads out the bill again and then calls out ‘Clear the lobbies’ so that anyone in the lobbies (the corridors behind the two sets of benches) moves out.
- 2 A bell is then rung (known as the **division bell**) so that MPs who might be in different parts of the building know they have to come and vote.
- 3 MPs go to the ‘ayes’ lobby to vote yes (to accept the bill) or the ‘nos’ lobby to vote no. The **tellers** check off the names of the people going through each lobby. (In Parliament itself there are two tellers in each lobby.) The two tellers then compare lists to make sure nobody has been through both lobbies.
- 4 The lists should be handed to the clerk who counts the number of ‘ayes’ (yes votes) and the number of ‘nos’ (no votes). The clerk records this on a piece of paper and gives it to the teller from the side that has won the vote, who announces it by saying, ‘The ayes to the right (*then the number of votes*) and the nos to the left (*then the number of votes*).’
- 5 The Speaker then says ‘So the ayes/nos have it.’
- 6 If there is a tie then the Speaker casts the deciding vote, but he or she always votes with the government.

The Speaker of the House of Commons.



PA Photos

3 Issues to consider

This activity explores how the British system for making laws has strengths and weaknesses.

Discuss or write responses to the following questions.

- Does everyone get a fair chance to express their view? In what ways do they and in what ways don't they?
- Is it right that the Speaker should have the deciding vote if there is a draw? Is there a better way of doing it?
- Is the way of voting the best way? MPs have only eight minutes from the ringing of the division bell to the time when the tellers close the doors to the lobbies – if they haven't got there in time then they can't vote. What kind of problems might this cause for some people?
- **Whips** are members of a political party who sometimes tell their MPs which way they have to vote on an issue. If the MPs disobey the whips they could be expelled from the party. What do you think is the point of such a system of using the whips? What are the advantages and the disadvantages?

The House of Lords and its role in government

As you can see from the diagram on page 29, a bill goes through a similar set of procedures in the House of Lords (the upper house) as it does in the House of Commons (the lower house). But who are the members of the House of Lords and how much power do they have?

Members of the House of Lords debate things in a similar way to the House of Commons. Instead of a Speaker they have someone called the **Lord Chancellor** who sits on a special chair called the Woolsack. Their lobbies are called the 'Contents Lobby' for those voting yes and the 'Not-Contents Lobby' for those voting no.



The Lord Chancellor speaks in the House of Lords.

Membership of the House Of Lords

The House of Lords was reformed by the 1999 House of Lords Act. Before this act, the majority of members of the House of Lords were **hereditary peers** (Lords) who have a title that they pass on to their sons when they die. The 1999 Act reduced the number of hereditary peers and increased the number of **life peers** – people who have been given power just for their lifetime and are

usually chosen by the government. The current membership of the House of Lords is

- 592 life peers (including **Law Lords**, who are judges)
- 92 hereditary peers
- 26 bishops of the Church of England.

What power does the House of Lords have?

- The House of Lords discusses bills sent to it by the House of Commons and can suggest changes.
- The Commons does not have to accept the Lords' advice but it usually does.
- Bills go backwards and forwards between the two houses until agreement is reached.
- If the Lords still reject a bill it cannot be sent up from the Commons again for another year, so effectively the House of Lords has the power to stop a bill becoming law for one year.
- After that the bill will become law whether the Lords like it or not.

4 Should we have a House of Lords? Your opinion

An exercise to involve you in debate about the structure of government in Britain.

Working in groups, discuss each of the following questions in turn.

- What are the benefits of having what is called a 'second chamber' – the House of Lords? Think about the experience of the people who sit in the House of Lords and the value of putting forward a different opinion.
- What arguments can be brought forward to say there should not be a House of Lords? Think of things such as who has chosen the Lords, how they have got there, what rights they have to delay bills becoming law.
- Reach a conclusion based on your discussion or written answers to the above. Should we have a House of Lords?

5 Should the House of Lords be abolished?

In this activity you will take part in a debate which will involve you in thinking about alternatives to the present system of government.

Preparing the arguments

Use the statements in the boxes on the right to fill in the answers to the points raised by the person in favour of keeping the House of Lords below. Write the arguments in your book. You can put the points into your own

words and add your own arguments if you wish, and you'll get a better mark if you do. The points in the boxes below are made by someone who is against the House of Lords and wants it abolished.

For and against

In favour It's good that we have a second opinion about bills before they become law, the House of Commons might have made mistakes.

Against

In favour That's true but the Lords is made up of people like judges and bishops who have a lot more experience than many of the politicians.

Against

In favour The average daily attendance at the House of Lords is at least as much as that of the House of Commons.

Against

In favour Hereditary peers is a tricky issue. But at least their fathers can pass down the experience to them. It's life peers who are more of a problem because they are appointed by the government and probably more likely to do what the government wants rather than be neutral. Is that right?

Against

In favour Democratic? It is democratic. The House of Lords can only delay a bill, they can't actually make laws themselves. It's just a way of keeping a check on a government to make sure it doesn't get too big for its boots.

Against

In favour It's very rare that the two houses disagree. Don't forget that the House of Lords is also a law court that people can appeal to if they believe a court decision is wrong.

Against

You don't need the House of Lords just to have an appeal court. One could be set up separately.

But what if it's the Lords who are making a mistake? They can delay a bill for a year and slow down the government's work.

But they aren't even elected so it's not fair that they should have power. The people have voted for the Commons, not the Lords.

Yes, life peers are no better than hereditary peers, the whole thing is a waste of time and not very democratic.

Yes, many of them do have more experience but most of them don't attend half the time as they're off doing business, or staying on their country estates.

OK, so maybe lots of them do attend, but why should we have hereditary peers in a modern democracy? Why should somebody have power just because of who their father was? And what about women?

► When you've filled in the points, see if you can continue the debate, bringing forward points of your own.

How much power does the Queen have?

The picture shows a state opening of Parliament. It takes place in the House of Lords. The Queen sits on the throne wearing her crown. She sends a messenger, called Black Rod, to ask the ministers from the House of Commons to join her in the House of Lords.

As Black Rod approaches the House of Commons he has the door slammed in his face. He then has to knock three times before he is let into the House of Commons. He asks the members of the Commons if they will join the Queen in the House of Lords to listen to the **Queen's speech**. The Queen's speech lists all the bills that the government wants to talk about in the next session of Parliament (it is actually written by the government, not the Queen). The members of the House of Commons then go to the Lords to listen to the speech.



PA Photos

The Queen's speech is written by the government with the help of civil servants. She cannot decide her own laws.

The Queen appoints a prime minister after an election. She could in theory choose anyone but always chooses the leader of the largest party.

The Queen has to give **royal assent** (permission) for bills to become law, but no monarch has refused to consent to a law since 1707.

The Queen is not allowed to make any alterations to bills.



PA Photos

This ceremony dates back to the 17th century when there was a war between Parliament and the king (King Charles I) over who should have more power, the king or Parliament. Parliament won the war and later decided to have a monarch (king or queen) again, but the monarch would have to obey some rules that Parliament had made. So the ritual of slamming the door in Black Rod's face is to show that Parliament has the power to refuse entry to a messenger from the Queen and that if the MPs decide to go and listen to her it is their choice.

Black Rod approaches the House of Commons to summon MPs to listen to the Queen's speech.

6 Write an essay

This piece of extended writing will help you draw together everything you've learned in this unit. It will be graded with a level.

The question you have to answer is:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present system of getting laws passed through Parliament?

Step 1

Go back and look at the section on page 27 headed 'What will you know?'. Check that you now know all the answers – if not, write them down. This knowledge will help you to plan your essay.

Step 2

Briefly describe the process that has to be followed for a bill to become law. Use the diagram on page 29 to help you make sure that you don't miss out any of the steps.

Step 3

Write a paragraph saying what you think is good about the system. You might mention the amount of consultation, the different types of people who have an input, the thoroughness of the process, the fact that everyone gets the chance to have a say. Add other ideas to this if you can.

Step 4

Write a paragraph saying what's wrong with the system in your opinion. You might mention how long it takes, the effect that whips can have, the fact that the voting is not done in secret and the power of delay that the House of Lords has. Add to this if you can.

Step 5

Come to a decision about whether you think the process is basically good or whether it needs a lot of reform. Pick out the **most important** reasons to support your answer, such as the most important reason why you think the system needs changing or the most important bit of the system that you think makes it work. Argue why the things you have chosen are more important than other considerations.

How your work will be assessed

Level 4

If you write a reasonable description of the main parts of the process but without really arguing whether it is adequate or not you will be given Level 4.

Level 5

If you describe the system well and pick out some of the main advantages and disadvantages as well as explaining why you think these things are good or bad then you will be given a Level 5. But you must say why you have selected the things you have.

Level 6

If you do everything that is in Level 5 but also argue clearly why some parts of the system are more important than others in helping you to come to your decision and you use all the correct terms for the different parts of the process then you will be given a Level 6. You will need to cover such issues as whether the system would be better if the House of Lords was reformed or abolished.

Self assessment

Before you hand in your essay take three different-coloured pens or pencils. Using one colour, underline each part of the essay that you think shows you have answered at Level 4. Using a second colour underline each part of your answer that you think shows you have

answered at Level 5 and use a third colour to underline what you think are Level 6 comments. Don't forget to include a key so that your teacher knows which level each of your colours stands for.

What do different political parties stand for?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers. Do you know what the following words mean?

- left-wing
- right-wing
- ideology
- communism
- nationalism
- fascism

What will you know?

- The main beliefs and ideas of the left and right in politics.
- What the Labour Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats stand for.
- The aims of some other political parties in the United Kingdom.

What do left and right mean in politics?

The terms **left-wing** and **right-wing** come from the time of the French Revolution in 1789. After the revolution the people who agreed with one set of aims happened to sit on the left of the new parliament and the people who thought the opposite sat on the right. But what are the main characteristics of parties that we call left-wing and right-wing?

Left

Parties of the left tend to believe in the following values.

- Strong central government control of the economy to make sure that everyone is treated fairly.
- Equal rights for everyone regardless of how wealthy they are.
- Sharing out wealth amongst as many as possible.
- International cooperation, as they believe that most wars are caused by powerful countries trying to exploit weaker countries.
- Breaking down of the class system so that people get things by merit and not because of who they are or who they know or how much money they have.

The most extreme form of left-wing **ideology** (set of ideas and beliefs) is known as **communism**.



Labour Prime Minister
Tony Blair.

Conservative leader
Iain Duncan Smith.



Right

Parties of the right tend to believe in the following values.

- Strong rule and control by those who have the knowledge and experience to carry it out.
- **Nationalism** or the importance of supporting your own country above others.
- That the government shouldn't interfere with business unless it has to.
- That competition is important and the fittest survive.
- A strong emphasis on upholding law and order.

The most extreme form of right-wing ideology is known as **fascism**.

A word of caution

You will often hear political parties in Britain referred to as 'left-wing' or 'right-wing' but this doesn't mean they are communist or fascist. If you look carefully at the diagram you'll see that the British parties are almost in the middle when we think of things on a world-wide scale, even though one may be slightly further left or slightly further right than the other.

The left and right in politics around the world



0 Left and right

An activity to investigate what the left and the right stand for in politics.

What to do

You are going to hold a class discussion about the views held by the left and right.

Get into groups of two or three. Look at the boxes on page 35 and 36 that set out the main beliefs of left-wing and right-wing parties. As a group, choose one point that you agree with and one that you disagree with.

Choose one person from your group to make a short speech to the rest of the class telling them which two points you have chosen and why you agree or disagree with them.

If there is time, give your classmates a chance to take up what you have said and give their views on this issue.

2 What's the difference?

An activity to explore what the two largest political parties in Britain believe in and stand for.

Get into pairs. Look at these descriptions of the main beliefs of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain. They were taken from their respective websites in January 2002. We haven't told you which set of beliefs is which.

Labour is regarded as being on the left and the Conservatives as being on the right. So which of these parties do you think is the Labour Party and which is the Conservative Party?

Discuss this with your partner and write down your answer. Explain how you came to this decision. Which phrases or policies gave it away?

Party 1

In 1997, [we] promised to build a modern, fairer Britain. [we promise]

- The biggest ever sustained increase in NHS [National Health Service] spending and more nurses.
- More children in class sizes of under 30.
- The lowest tax burden for a working family since 1972.
- At least 1.5 million people gaining from the minimum wage.
- A million more jobs, with the help of the New Deal.

Our values

- social justice
- strong community and strong values
- reward for hard work
- decency
- rights matched by responsibilities.

Party 2

[We believe]

Freedom

[We] stand for less interference from the state – freedom for individuals, families, voluntary groups and businesses.

Enterprise

[We] want to keep taxes low and set businesses free from red tape to help Britain compete in the global economy.

Responsibility

[We] stand for the rule of the law and support for the family. We recognise our duty to protect the environment for future generations.

Nation

[We] want to safeguard the union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, maintain strong defence and uphold our right to national self-government. We want to be in Europe but not run by Europe.

Other political parties



PA Photos

Charles Kennedy, leader of the Liberal Democrats.

The Labour Party and the Conservative Party have been the only two parties to form governments in Britain since the end of the First World War in 1919. Because these two parties dominate politics in the UK it's easy for us to forget that there are many more political parties we can vote for. The third most popular party in Britain is the **Liberal Democrats**. Some of the other political parties in the UK are described in the boxes below.

The Liberal Democrats believe in:

- raising income tax in order to get more money for education
- regional government for all areas of Britain so that areas such as Cornwall would have their own government
- changing the way we vote by using a form of proportional representation (see unit 4)
- investing more money in the health service to bring down waiting lists.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland there are a number of parties including the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party who both want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. There are also parties known as Republican parties, including the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Fein. These parties want Northern Ireland to be part of a single united Republic of Ireland, no longer part of the United Kingdom.

Scotland and Wales

In Scotland and Wales, as well as the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrats parties mentioned above, there are the Scottish National Party (SNP), who want an independent Scotland, and in Wales, Plaid Cymru, who want an independent Wales.

Other parties

Have you heard of any of these parties? Perhaps you could find out something about what they stand for.

- The Green Party
- The UK Independence Party
- The Monster Raving Loony Party
- The British National Party (BNP)

► Anybody can form a political party if they have ideas and get enough people to vote for them. What kind of policies would you put forward if you formed your own political party?

How does the government get and spend its money?

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers. Do you know what the following words mean?

- revenue
- income tax
- national insurance
- VAT
- expenditure
- Chancellor of the Exchequer
- budget

What will you know?

By the end of this unit you should know

- how the government gets the money it needs to run the country
- how the government allocates expenditure to different services
- why the decision to increase spending on a particular service is a difficult one.

Where does the government get its money from?

The government raises **revenue** (income) from these sources. The figures after each one are the percentage of the total revenue that each kind of tax makes up.

Income tax 23%

This is money that is taken out of peoples' wages and paid straight to the government. The more you earn the more you pay.

Social security contributions 16%

National Insurance is also taken directly from peoples' wages and helps to pay for things such as hospitals and social security benefits such as unemployment benefit.

VAT 16%

Value Added Tax is a tax (normally set at 17.5% of the price) that is added to the cost of most things that we buy.

Excise duty 11%

This is tax on things such as alcohol and on goods that are exported out of the country or imported into the country.

Corporation tax 9%

This is a tax paid by some large businesses on the trade that they do.

Business rates 5%

Businesses and shops pay a tax to the local government for the properties they use.

Council tax 3%

Everyone over 18 who owns or rents a property pays a tax to the local government every year. The bigger or more expensive the property the more you pay.

Borrowing 6%

The government, like anyone else, can borrow money from banks or other institutions.

Other taxes and financing 11%

There are many other taxes that make up the rest of the way the government raises its money.

1 Which slice of the pie?

An activity to test your understanding of where the government gets its money from.

Make a copy of the pie chart and write on it in the correct places which sections represent the different sources of government money. You should be able to spot that the biggest one is from income tax and then work it out from there.



2 Spending decisions

An activity to investigate how a government decides what it should spend money on.

We often hear people say something like 'The government should spend more money on public transport' – or on education or the NHS... But the government has to decide between competing requests for more money. If it is not going to raise taxes, then spending more money on one service means cutting spending somewhere else.

Look at the following arguments for increasing or reducing **expenditure** (spending). Think about the different points of

view and then decide whether you would increase or decrease spending on each service. Remember that if you increase spending in one area then you have to decrease it in another. The comments below are only examples of the kind of things that people say, you will have heard other arguments and will have views of your own that you should take into account when making your decisions.

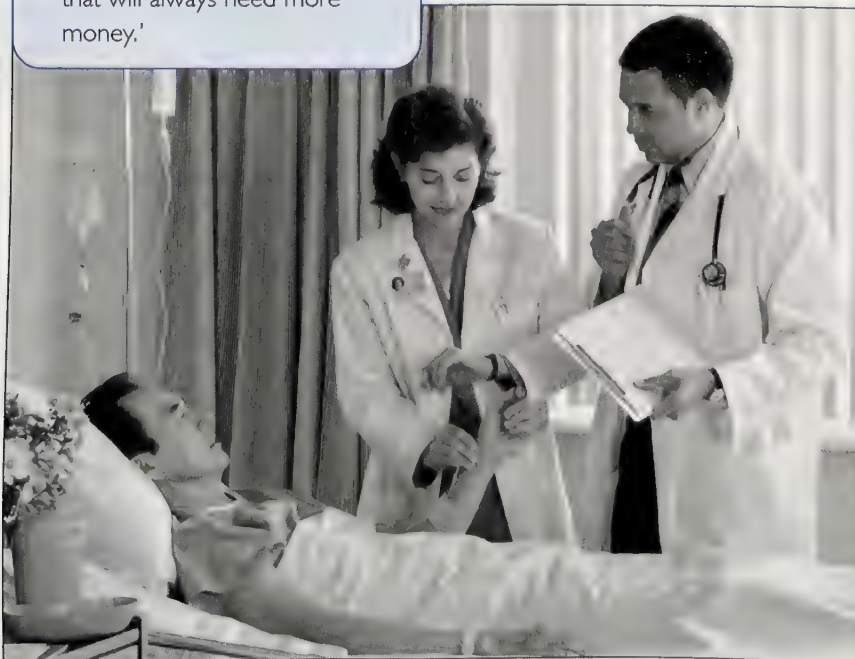
Write notes on your spending decisions.

Health

- 'We need more doctors and nurses and more hospitals in order to reduce waiting lists. Everybody has the right to good medical care.'
- 'We should set up private hospital and medical insurance schemes like other countries do. The NHS is a black hole that will always need more money.'

Social security

- 'We should increase unemployment benefit to help people who can't find work.'
- 'We should cut unemployment benefit because there are lots of scroungers who claim benefits rather than going out and getting jobs.'



Education

- 'Our schools are desperate for books and equipment and the buildings need repair. Education is an investment in our future and we must fund it properly.'
- 'We already spend too much on education. Much of this money is wasted because students don't use most of what they learn when they go out to work.'

Defence

- 'The world is a dangerous place. We need strong armed forces and good weapons. Our armed forces are smaller than they have been for over 100 years.'
- 'We don't need large armed forces in peace time and we can always work alongside other countries in times of danger.'

Law and order

- 'We need more police on the beat to keep the streets safe and to catch more criminals.'
- 'Too much money is wasted on making prisons nice places to be and treating criminals to holidays.'

Transport

- 'The trains are always late and overcrowded. We need more investment in public transport.'
- 'The railways should be funded by private investment. State-owned services are always inefficient.'

3 Budget day

An activity to get you to argue a case as to how you would distribute government spending

What to do

Imagine that you are the **Chancellor of the Exchequer** and it's **budget** day (the day when the government announces its taxation and spending plans). Write a speech announcing your budget based on your answers to activities 1 and 2. Remember that if you intend to increase spending without reducing it elsewhere, you will need to raise taxes.

Expenditure

- Go through all the things you propose to **increase** spending on and give convincing reasons why. Briefly outline why some people might think you should not increase spending on these things and argue your point of view.
- Go through all the things you propose to **reduce** expenditure on and explain why you are doing this. Briefly outline why some people might think you should not decrease spending on these things and argue your point of view.

Chancellor of the Exchequer
Gordon Brown holds up his
red ministerial box on
budget day.

**Income**

- Now say where you intend to get extra money from to pay for the reforms you have just suggested – unless you have reduced spending in other areas enough to cover them. Decide which areas of taxation you are going to increase (or decrease) and give reasons for your decisions.

How your speech will be assessed**Level 4**

If you say which things you will increase or decrease spending on and give reasons mainly from the examples shown in this unit then you will be given a Level 4.

Level 5

If you begin to argue why some things are more important than others by saying how they will benefit the country as a whole and you also say where you are going to get the money from to pay for the changes then you will be given a Level 5.

Level 6

If you do all of what is needed for Level 5 but also say why you have dismissed the claims for increased spending in some areas and you use arguments and examples of your own, as well as the ones shown on these pages, then you will be given a Level 6.

Politics and the media

What do you know?

See how much of this you know before you start and then come back to it when you've finished the unit to check that you know all the answers.

- What is a party political broadcast?
- What is a spin doctor?
- How do spin doctors influence the media?

What will you know?

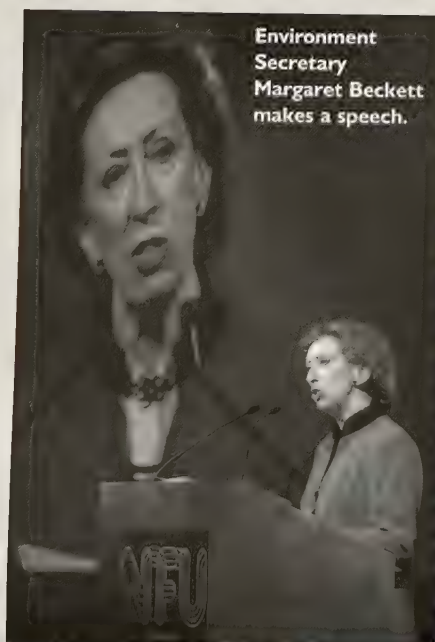
- The different kinds of media used by politicians to get their message across.
- Techniques used to emphasise the positive things and to divert attention away from the negative.
- How politicians can manipulate (twist) things to their own advantage by using the media.

Party political broadcasts



Have you ever seen a party political broadcast on television? They are programmes made by political parties which try to persuade the public to vote for them. You are most likely to have seen one before a general election.

Perhaps you turned the television to another channel when it came on because you found it boring. Party political broadcasts are just one way in which political parties use the media to get their message across to the voters.



Speeches

Speeches made in public are another way that politicians get their message across. Here is part of a speech made by Prime Minister Tony Blair on 24th April 2001.

We were elected in 1997 to make a real difference in health, in education, and on the economy. We have rightly focused on those priorities. But ever since we came to office, we have also dedicated ourselves to the regeneration of our local communities and neighbourhoods.

To raise the standards of education in this country, to cut down on crime, to improve living standards, we need more and better schools,

better hospitals, more police and more jobs.

We also need stronger local communities and an improved local quality of life. Streets where parents feel safe to let their children walk to school. Where people want to use the parks. Where graffiti, vandalism, litter and dereliction are not tolerated. Where the environment in which we live fosters rather than alienates a sense of local community and mutual responsibility.

Websites

Putting information onto websites is a more recent way that political parties have tried to get their message across.

The following information appeared on the home page of the 10 Downing Street website (www.number-10.gov.uk) in April 2002.

Welcome to 10 DOWNING Street

REGISTER
• Email updates

CATEGORIES
Business and Economy
Education and Culture
Health and Lifestyle
Home Affairs
Work and Welfare
Environment and Countryside
Transport and Energy
Science and Technology
Government
International

NEWSROOM
MAGAZINE
FACTS
BROADCASTS
YOUR SAY
10 OUT OF 10

Death of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother: Government guidance on national mourning
Buckingham Palace have announced today (Sunday) the arrangements for the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. This will take place at 11.30 am on Tuesday, 9 April, at Westminster Abbey. Parliament will be recalled for 11.30 am on Wednesday, 3 April, to enable both Houses to pay tributes to The Queen Mother. Her coffin will be taken, by ceremonial procession, from St James's Palace to Westminster Hall on Friday, 5 April, and she will then Lie-in-State from the afternoon of Friday, 5 April, until Monday, 8 April. Following discussion with the Royal Family the Government has issued guidance for the public on the observance of mourning during this period.
[More](#)

The Queen Mother
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother has died peacefully in her sleep aged 101. The Prime Minister Tony Blair said: 'Our thoughts are with The Queen; and particularly so after the sad loss of Princess Margaret, and with all the Royal Family, with whom Britain mourns, united in grief at our loss and giving thanks for a life of extraordinary service to our country.'
[More](#)

New measures in airport security announced
New measures, responsibilities and controls for those working in airport security have been announced.
[More](#)

ITV Digital placed into administration
Commenting on the decision to place ITV Digital into administration, Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell said: 'Viewers will continue to receive all the free to air and pay services.'
[More](#)

TEXT ONLY

If I were Prime Minister...
Tell us what you would do if you were Prime Minister!
[More](#)

Reforming Public Services

Prime Minister's Speeches

Welcome to 10 Downing St

MMR - The facts

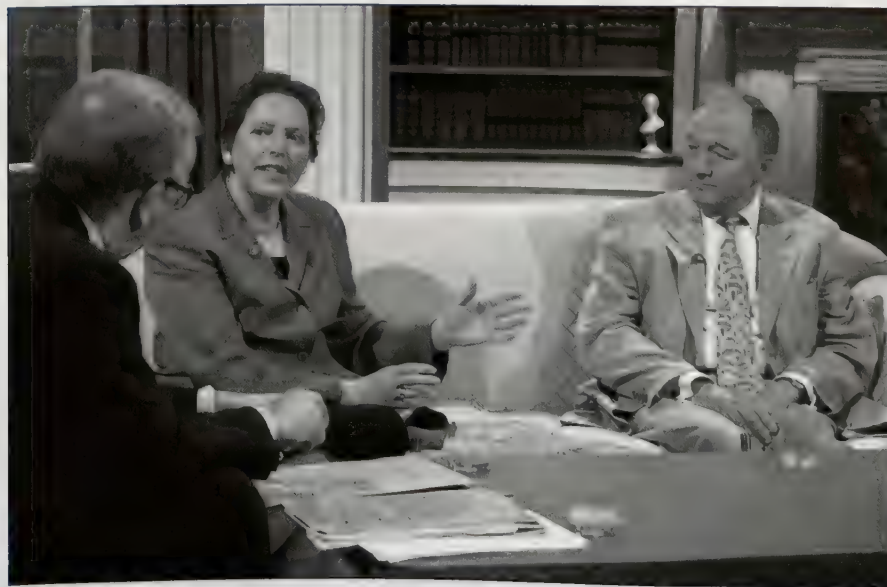
No. 10

PMs in

Television and radio interviews

Politicians often use interviews on television and radio to get their message across. They might be keen to appear on television to put forward their point of view, or they might be reluctant to appear if they expect that they will face difficult questions. Usually politicians insist on knowing beforehand what the questions are going to be.

Susan Cramer (Liberal Democrat) and Ken Livingstone (independent) are interviewed on *Breakfast with Frost*.



Spin doctors

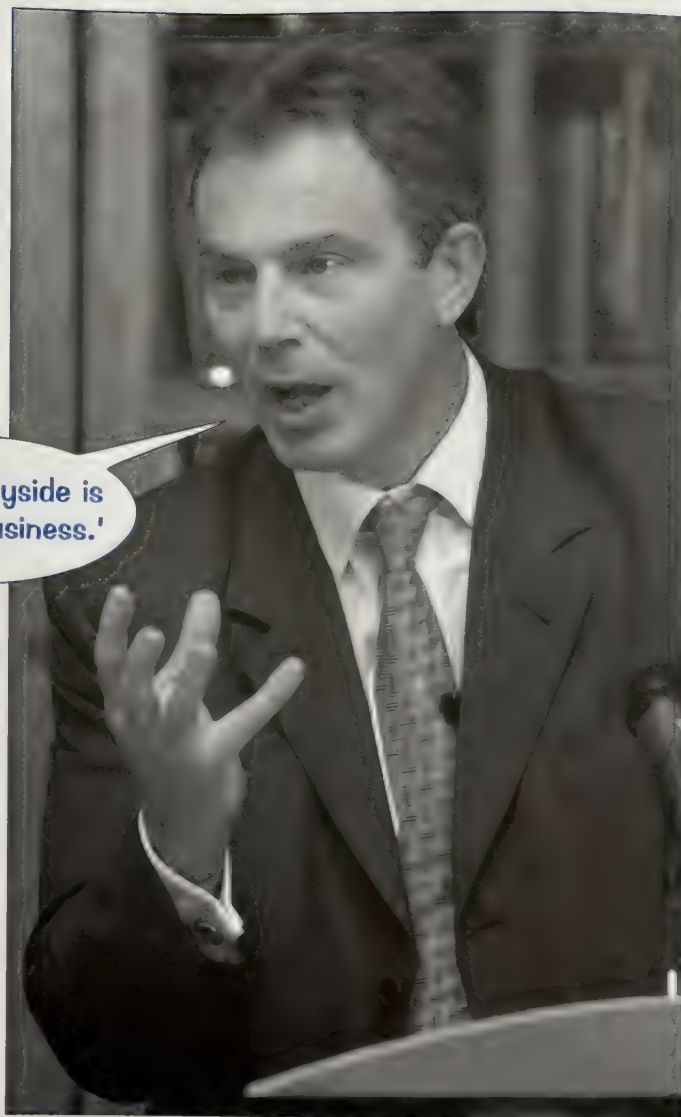
The term 'spin doctor' is relatively new in British politics. It refers to people – officially called 'special advisors' – who use the media to give a positive image of a political party. They are employed to do this by the political parties. They might do this by 'leaking' information, which means letting information about an issue out to the press but without saying where it came from. Sometimes they delay the release of a news story until they think it will either help their own side or harm the opposition.

Spin doctors often help politicians to write speeches in such a way that certain phrases will catch the imagination of the public. At the height of the foot and mouth disease crisis in May 2001, Tony Blair made a speech in which he said 'The countryside is open for business'. This was despite the fact that footpaths were closed and animals were being slaughtered across the country. The government needed to encourage tourists from the UK and abroad to visit attractions in the countryside and to do this Tony Blair needed to give the impression that things were continuing as normal. As the spin doctors had hoped, the media picked up on the phrase 'open for business' and helped put this message across to the public.

Tony Blair ended his speech by saying,

'Foot and mouth isn't beaten yet. We have more to do. But we are on the home straight.'

This gave the impression that the government was in control of the situation and that the end of the crisis was near.



▶ Your turn to be a spin doctor

An activity to involve you in identifying some of the techniques used to present political parties in a positive light.

What to do

Imagine that you are a spin doctor working for the Secretary of State for Education. It has just been revealed in the newspapers that 78% of students have failed their maths GCSE (this is a fictional scenario!), while the number of students passing GCSE English has increased. The minister has been asked to appear on a live television interview with Jeremy Rottweiler and has asked your

advice on whether to agree to the interview and, if so, what to say. Write some notes on what your advice to the minister would be. Think of some ways of giving this embarrassing news a 'positive spin'. Would you advise the minister to use the other media we have looked at in this unit to put a positive image across? How might you do this?

2 Design a storyboard for a party political broadcast

An activity to help you to see how a positive image can be created for a political party in a television broadcast.

A storyboard is used by television directors and scriptwriters to plan a programme. It is a series of sketches with a brief caption underneath, that shows the main images that the viewer will see.

What to do

Imagine you are planning a storyboard for a party political broadcast to try to win votes for an opposition party just before a general election. Complete the storyboard that has been started for you below. You can do as many sketches as you like but about 10 to 15 should be sufficient. Make sure that you include the following techniques.

- Only present positive images of your party and life under your government.
- Present negative images of the opposition and life under their government.
- Use images and phrases that are easy to remember and make an impact.
- Appeal to people's emotions rather than presenting them only with facts.



What to do

When you have finished your storyboard, write a short paragraph explaining what techniques you were using to put your message across and why those techniques are effective.

How your work will be assessed

In order to gain a high grade for your storyboard you do not have to be a good artist. It is not the sketches that will be graded but the ideas that you use. You should show that you understand how party political broadcasts are carefully crafted in order to give a positive image of the party and get a particular message across.

Multiple choice test

What level have you reached?

Much of the work you have done throughout this book has been marked against Levels 4, 5 and 6. Here are 15 multiple choice questions so you can check to see whether you have consolidated all the knowledge and skills you have gained.

Before you do the test

Read through all your previous answers to activities from this book. Don't worry if you haven't done all of the units or activities – you don't need to get every question correct to be awarded a certain level and some of the questions are testing your skill at using information rather than your ability to remember lots of detail.

Look back at all the 'What do you know?' sections that appear at the beginning of each unit. These provide a good quick revision tool.

Instructions for completing the test

Each question has three answers but only **one** of the answers is correct.

On a separate piece of paper write down the numbers 1–15 in a list and by the side of each number write down what you think is the correct answer for the question. If you think the correct answer for question 1 is (c) then write 1.c and so on.

After the test

Your teacher has an answer sheet from the Teacher's Guide and will go through the correct answers with you. If you get three out of five questions right in a particular level then you will probably be given a grade within that level such as 5- or 4+.

Good luck!

Level 4 questions

- 1** In some schools all the decisions are taken by people voting, including the students in some cases. They might vote to decide on school uniform or on how long the lunch hour should be.
What type of decision-making process is this an example of?
 - a Proportional representation.
 - b Dictatorship.
 - c Democracy.
- 2** Which of the following is the youngest age that women in Britain have to be before they can vote in a general election?
 - a 17
 - b 18
 - c 21
- 3** Somebody who stands for election during a general election campaign is known as a what?
 - a Canvasser.
 - b Councillor.
 - c Parliamentary candidate.
- 4** Which member of the government is responsible for preparing the budget?
 - a The Chancellor of the Exchequer.
 - b The Foreign Secretary.
 - c The Prime Minister.
- 5** What do we call the members of Parliament who sit in the House of Commons?
 - a Government.
 - b Parliament.
 - c MPs.

Level 5 questions

- 6 Which of the following shows the order in which a bill passes through Parliament and becomes a law?
- Green Paper, White Paper, House of Commons, House of Lords, Queen.
 - Queen, House of Lords, House of Commons.
 - Green Paper, White Paper, House of Lords, House of Commons, Queen.
- 7 Which statement below is true?
- The Queen plays no part in the law-making process.
 - No monarch has ever refused to pass a bill into law.
 - No bill becomes law until the Queen has given her consent.
- 8 Here is a made-up set of results from an election using the first past the post system.

Political parties	Orange party	Purple party	Pink party
Number of MPs elected	400	200	150
Number of votes	2 million	1 million	3 million

If a system of proportional representation (PR) was used, which of these parties would have the greatest number of MPs?

- The Pink Party.
- The Purple Party.
- The Orange Party.

- 9 Who decides whether a building can be built in a certain location?
- Local business people.
 - The district council.
 - National government.

- 10 What do we call the people who are employed to make sure that a political party is always shown in a positive way?
- Politicians.
 - Press secretaries.
 - Spin doctors.

Level 6 questions

- 11 Here are some statements that are typical of those that a spin doctor might release to the press.

Government congratulates students on exam results

For the third year running GCSE results are up with more than 55% of students now gaining five or more passes at grades A* – C.

Unemployment continues to fall

The latest unemployment figures show a drop of 12 000, bringing the percentage of people out of work to its lowest level for over ten years.

What common technique used by spin doctors can be seen in the way this information is presented?

- Both positive and negative things are highlighted.
- Only negative things are highlighted, not positive.
- Only positive things are highlighted, not negative.

- 12 Look at this section of a typical speech that might be made by a party leader.

When we came to power we promised to cut down on crime, raise living standards and make our streets safer places to be. We said that we would raise the standard of education.

We also need stronger local communities and an improved local quality of life. Streets where parents feel safe to let their children walk to school.

What technique, often used by politicians in speeches, is being used here?

- a Saying what everyone agrees is needed but not how they are going to achieve it.
- b Saying how they will make things better.
- c Speaking in language that will confuse people.

13 Which of these political parties is said to be the furthest right?

- a The Liberal Democrats.
- b The Labour Party.
- c The Conservative Party.

14 Which of these beliefs is said to be the furthest left on the political spectrum?

- a Communism.
- b Fascism.
- c Socialism.

15 Which British political party is being described here?

This party believes strongly in law and order and in nationalism and promoting a strong Britain. It believes that governments should not interfere in business.

- a The Conservative Party.
- b The Liberal Democrats.
- c The Labour Party.

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